

The Office of the Independent Police Auditor (IPA) realized several significant accomplishments over the past year. The relocation of the office, from its previous location at 4 North Second Street, Suite 650 was finalized on August 5, 2000, when the IPA took possession of its new office space, next door in the lower level at 2 North Second Street, Suite 93. The new location affords the IPA with many new amenities, including space for the two additional staff members and an accessible location for the many citizens that use the services of the IPA.

The new location keeps the IPA in a central downtown location that is close to several forms of public transportation and in a location where historically the greatest percentage of citizens that tend to utilize the services of the IPA reside, work, or play. The new office space compliments a professional IPA staff and provides a professional environment for the residents of San José to access the critical services provided by the IPA.

As a part of the 1999 Year End Report, the IPA recommended several service enhancements to help strengthen the complaint process to meet citizen

expectations. As a result of its recommendation to enhance service delivery through personalized contact, on August 8, 2000, a Complaint Investigator and an Office Specialist were hired and began their tenure with the IPA. The Complaint Investigator comes to the IPA with a well-rounded background in private corporate security, while the Office Specialist comes to the IPA with experience in the private sector as an Administrative Assistant. With the addition of two new positions, the IPA continues to move forward and is better able to meet the stringent demands expected by the community it serves.

The IPA also recommended adding subpoena power for the San José Police Department Internal Affairs Unit, to assist in compelling civilian witnesses to divulge information critical to an investigation, release, and/or provide physical evidence such as medical records that may be integral to an investigation. The City Council adopted this recommendation and authorized subpoena power to the Internal Affairs Unit. The IPA's requests to subpoena evidence or witnesses will be processed and handled by IA.

11

CONCLUSION

The IPA also proposed a “Voluntary Mediation Program” and the development of specialized training courses to enhance the communication skills of the officers assigned to meet and greet the public. The recommendations for developing a “Mediation Program” and “Specialized Communications Training Courses” were adopted by the Chief of Police and the City Council. A “Voluntary Mediation Program” will be implemented in the 2001 calendar year. The communication courses designed to address the communication issue have been developed and constitute a three hour block of training and will be taught as part of the annual Advanced Officer (AO) training¹ during the 2001 calendar year.

A major goal for the 2001 calendar year is for the IPA to take a proactive approach to civilian oversight of police practices. This proactive approach will include exploring innovative ways to reduce the frequency of complaints alleged to have violated policies stemming from prior IPA recommendations, identify police conduct that is resulting in complaints and/or law suits,

and create a vertical review process that brings together city departments that directly or indirectly address police misconduct .

¹ Advanced Officer Training is a requirement for police officers to retain certification through the Police Officers Standards and Training (POST). The State of California through POST requires police officers to receive 24 hours of AO training every two years.